843 4. A pregnant woman must not step over her husband; this would make him ill.

833 5. The sexual act may be performed with impunity in the courtyard of a dwelling (at night). Otherwise, it is expressly forbidden to do it outside the house and in any way other than lying on a mat or Peulh secco, in any case never directly on the ground.

845 837 847 6. The delivery will be difficult and complicated if the child was conceived in adultery. If the woman is to be delivered, it is absolutely necessary that she confess the name of her accomplice in the presence of witnesses. In this case, if the husband demands it -- and he always does -- the newborn child is killed by the erring wife immediately after it is born (1). [185]

1. The procedure is as follows. Some young mothers simply twist its neck and strangle it. Others put the baby in a jar of lukewarm water. The baby instinctively drinks and finally drowns.

837 684 Adultery. Before the arrival of the French, adultery committed by the nakomsé (descendants of naba) was punished by the death of the guilty couple. Among ordinary Mossi, the culprit was simply banished from the family.

However, if the lover was not a relative of the woman's husband, he was forbidden henceforth to come to the village where the woman lived. If he failed to observe this rule, he risked being killed.

837 As a general rule, a Moaga woman takes a lover in a village some distance away from her husband's village and not far from her own. When she asks her husband's permission to visit her family, she profits by the opportunity to spend some time with her lover or to let him know that she is going to her parents' home.

Dissolution of Marriage. Divorce.

586 842 A divorce may be imposed by a husband who no longer loves his wife, but neither ill-health nor sterility may be invoked for the purpose. In the latter case, it is simply assumed that God does not want the woman to have children. She is often regarded with scorn, but sometimes no attention is paid to her lack of children.

843 A woman's role is to bear children. When she knows that she is pregnant, she no longer consents to come to her husband, but she is careful not to inform him of her state; if she told him, the child would die. If her parents happen to pass away during her pregnancy, she does not go into mourning and does not attend the funeral. If she is newly wed and has not yet borne children, one of the other wives of her husband, or, if there are none, the husband's sister, comes at night to sprinkle the husband and wife with water. The young wife will henceforth call this woman her husband, prepare millet mush for her, and heat the water in which she washes. When the pregnancy begins to show, one of the wife's female relatives consults the sorcerer [782] to find out which sacrifice should be offered so that all will go well, but the husband is not informed of this consultation. Sometimes the sacrifice is repeated when the birth draws near. When the first baby 851 is born, the husband sends a child to his wife's relatives with a rooster or a hen depending on the newborn's sex. The child tosses the bird into the yard without saying a word and runs away; everybody understands.

847 /40/ A child born deformed, lame, or blind is done away with; ●845 it is simply drowned without further ado if considered incurable. In 732 olden times, twins were often drowned also because their birth entails 761 difficulties for the family, who must offer special sacrifices; some- 753 times only one of them was done away with. If they are spared and die a natural death, the mother wears a small bell at her ankle until the anniversary of the death (koure). If the mother happens to die or the father becomes ill, the sorcerer need only say so and the children are put to death, because they are said to have caused the illness or death of their parents. A baby who could barely walk was once brought by relatives to the Koupéla Fathers. He had been born on a Friday and his mother had died; that was sufficient to call for his sacrifice. His relatives tried unsuccessfully to poison him; they exposed him for three days in the bush, and the child did not die. As a last resort they brought him to the missionaries, who hastened to shelter him. Children recognized as insane are abandoned in the bush where they die of hunger.

732 It is only fair to add, however, that these barbarous practices 845 reminiscent of Sparta are not invariably followed. Several lame and incurably ill children are carefully tended by their parents, and some twins born prior to the French occupation are alive and in good health.

776 other hand, the kikirsi do not drink fermented millet beer, but they must be offered some before the yeast (da'nodo) is added. They have their preferences like human beings. They know hatred and jealousy, and sometimes they even kill one another. They are said to have two 776 sexes, to marry, and to procreate. They even have the special faculty 845 of always bearing twins, and this is why twins are called by their 551 name and are dedicated to them; it is believed that spirits dwell within them.

776 The birth of twins causes their mother much trouble. Formerly 845 both were sometimes put to death, while at other times only one was killed. When a woman bears twins, she builds at the door of her hut 782 a tiny miniature house where the spirits dwelling /82/ within her children will take shelter. Three times a year if her means allow it, in the spring, in the winter, and at the height of the rainy season, or at least once a year, a guinea hen must be offered to the kikirsi. This fowl is sacrificed exclusively to them. On that day they must also be offered their favorite foods, and this means that honey, sesame, and millet cakes must be purchased, that beer must be prepared and a jar saved without yeast, that millet mush has to be cooked, and especially that no pepper be added to the sauce. Otherwise the husband, wife, or children will be afflicted with a dreadful eye disease, for [753] such is the illness which the kikirsi have the power of visiting on human beings.

776 As children, twins may wear only the kankabra, a garment made 845 of black and whitish threads, the characteristic clothing of the kikirsi. Happily, they are later allowed to dress as they please. If the mother dies, the twins offer the sacrifices themselves and build the small hut that serves as a dwelling for their little spirit. The later born twin is considered the older of the two. They both wear the same bracelet and share everything given to them. It is not considered proper to make a gift to one without giving the same thing to the other. Actually, these customs are to be found in Africa from Bambara country to Tanganyika.

776 To return to the kikirsi themselves, they are present everywhere. In the bush they are fond of termite nests, large and small. They 241 also like open spaces. They are to be found around the villages; there are ponds set apart for the kikirsi, wells considered to belong to them. There are spirits watching over every field, and before sowing, as also before harvesting millet, the master of the field sacrifices a chicken to the spirit on a stone in the middle of the field. The

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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776 bush is included in the orderly universe which the Mossi have fabri-
823 cated, it exists at the periphery and is a thing to be feared. The name of this unknown and unowned part of the bush is synonymous with fear. Dreams in which an individual sees frightening images are called "bush
[828] creeping up" (*weogo doore*) or "bush traps you" (*weogo n'yoko fo*). These phrases are also used to describe the emotional shock, the feeling of fear, elicited by the unexpected sight of a frightening object like a corpse or a lion.

Most important among the supernatural beings inhabiting the bush are the twin spirits (*kikirdisi*). Living in pairs or in larger groups, they inhabit the bush, caves, baobab trees, and certain dense thickets of underbrush. While specific details vary, it is generally conceded that they are small, about a foot tall, black like the Mossi, and of both sexes. Their social organization is like that of men: each group is ruled over by a twin spirit-chief (*Kikirdisi Naba*).

845 Twin children are always regarded as the emissaries of the twin spirits.
776 Shortly after the birth of twins their mother takes a present of food to a place where the twin spirits are known to dwell. Leaving the gift and expressing her thanks, she also makes it clear to the twin spirits that if they have any sort of malicious intent in sending her their children they might as well take them back immediately, since she will tolerate no foolishness. If, through her new children, they plan to torment her, they should save their efforts and desist at once. While the twin spirits are frequently mischief-makers, they are more frivolous than malicious and essentially neither good nor evil. The death of newborn twins is accepted with relief, for it is believed certain that the twin spirits have been thwarted in their mischievous intent and have conceded defeat.

THE ECONOMIC AND CEREMONIAL CYCLE

796 A brief description of the economic cycle and the ceremonials which
221 mark its phases will serve to illustrate the way the Mossi perceive their relationship to the forces of their natural, supernatural, and social milieux and the methods by which they seek to assure their well-being through control of these forces. The year is usually divided into twelve
[805] moons whose names refer either to the principal economic activity of the season or to a ceremonial which accompanies it.

The first moon of the Mossi year is called "Gambo" after the name of the village which celebrates its first rain-making ceremony (*Tengana*) at this time. Although the rains are still five or six months away, this ritual marks the beginning of the new economic cycle. Each household which possesses land controlled by the earth custodian sends one of its young girls with an offering of millet gruel to place at the altar of Tenga Wende, the terrestrial manifestation of the deity. The earth custodian advises

551 to the clan later) and not a family name. Ouidiraogo, for example, which is the most widespread clan name among the Mossi, is common to innumerable families.

As for the personal name, proper to the individual, it is quite changeable and variable, for often an individual does not answer to a single name but to two or three: the name his sponsor gave him, the name his mother gives him, the name given him by his friends, and the name given him by his neighbors. On the one hand, the Black likes to conceal his name, while on the other hand he changes it or seems to change it with the greatest ease. We have already seen /in a section not translated/ that the Moro Naba, when ascending the throne, change their proper name to an official name, and from that day forward the former name may never be pronounced. The Mossi who enlist as riflemen (and this is true of all Sudanese men) tend never to sign up under their real name /254/, and this has nothing to do with thoughts of desertion. They give the name of their village or that of their tribe or of a neighboring tribe, or just any name they please. In a word, one cannot look for the same conception of names among the Blacks as is found among Europeans. The European has a name (proper name, family name), and that is the end of it. He is listed, labeled, classified. He cannot do away with it. His name is one with him. The Black is too primitive to have reached this kind of social discipline. He conceals his true personality under the changing names to which he does not want to be linked.

To summarize, the Mossi and Foulsé of Yatenga have (1) a personal name, a first name or proper name as we say in French, along with a certain number of names or agnomina which are used in addition. (2) One says, "So-and-So, son of So-and-So," when wishing to designate someone without confusing him with another person who carries the same name. These two designations provide the proper name and the father's name, but not, properly speaking, the family name. As we already know, the family extends well beyond the household. (3) Although no family names exist, there is the name of the clan, which in turn extends far beyond the family. There is, therefore, both more and less than a family name, but no exact equivalent to it.

845 Freaks. Twins. —Abnormal children frighten the Mossi. Their mothers do not suckle them and thus condemn them to a speedy death.
847 Children born of incest are put to death.

845 The birth of twins is a good omen when they are of different sex.
787 If they are of the same sex, however, it is a sign of approaching death for the father if they are girls, or for the mother if they are of the male sex. To conjure away this fate, a chicken is sacrificed.

853 Nursing. —When a woman is unable to nurse her child, another woman of the family is called in as a wet nurse, or, more simply, a goat is made to suckle the child. Both cases, however, are quite unusual.

854 Charms for children and tattooing. To protect the child from ill-
751 ness or accidents, a necklace with a charm containing the ashes of various shrubs is placed around its neck about two months after birth.

304 The child is tattooed two and a half or three years after birth. Old women are in charge of this operation. They trace out the lines for the scars on the child's face with a sharp little knife which is bent at the tip. Then they put a mixture of karite butter and powdered charcoal on the wounds to stop the flow of blood.

Tattooing is the same for all the Mossi of Yatenga without distinction of rank. It consists of three vertical scars on each cheek, an oblique one on either side of the face from the corner between the eye and nose to the base of the cheek, and two or three little ones in the middle of the forehead. /255/

854 The very young child. —As in all of the /French/ Sudan, the mother carries the child on her back, wrapped in a cloth that is knotted in front over or under the breasts. She goes thus everywhere, works, pounds millet, etc., with the child on her back.

853 When she wants to suckle it, she brings it to her side, astraddle one hip, and supports it with one arm. She does not put it on the ground unless she is in her hut or teaching it how to walk.

When the child is two or three, it stops nursing and is put on the ground.

857 Until they are four or five, the children run about the compound and around it. At that age, they begin to go out into the bush all by themselves and to play with the other little boys.

Children's games. —We shall deal with this subject under "Mode of Subsistence (hygiene, games, play)."

857 Familial education. —The boys, as soon as they reach the age of
868 five or six, go with their big brother and tend the goats in the bush. They also go and fetch firewood, straw, etc. When they are nine or ten, they begin to handle the daba /a field implement/. At eleven or twelve they are already doing men's work.

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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rulers left the Dagomba region in the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana) during the 11th century and moved into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still extant kingdoms are rulers (*Moro Nabas*) who hold feudal-like control of the provinces, districts, and villages which comprise their domains. A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus extends the power of the rulers into the smallest village, and funnels taxes and tribute back to them. French conquest modified this highly efficient system but did not greatly change it. The Mossi state apparatus rests on an economy which produces cotton cloth, horses, sheep, cattle, and goats, but the main support of this large population—one of the densest in the Sudan—is grain agriculture. Today, some Mossi districts still have as many as 70 persons per square mile.

The Mossi are divided into stratified royal, noble, and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is a process by which royal sublineages descend serially until they merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there were once large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossi. Patrilocal polygynous extended family households, grouped into villages, form the basic Mossi settlement pattern. Marriages are arranged between unrelated persons through the agency of lineage members who establish "friendly" relationships. The two friends might ask their lineage heads for women to exchange as wives, or the "friend" who has received more gifts from his opposite number will give over a wife. Because only the older men have women and goods at their disposal, they are usually the ones who receive wives. The result is that most young men have no wives and must content themselves with occasional lovers until they inherit wives from lineage members. The Mossi have a great fear of incestuous relations which bring down the wrath of the ancestors (the *Keemsé*).

Ancestor veneration is at the core of Mossi religious behavior. The recent ancestors are notified, through sacrifices, of the important events in the lives of their descendants, and they are expected to aid in solving everyday problems. The ancestors also invoke their sanctions against antisocial behavior among their descendants. Once a year the Mossi people, in concert with the Moro Nabas, appeal to their individual and collective ancestors for good crops, large families, and for the preservation of the dynasty. Often associated with the ancestors as propitiatory agents are local deities called *Tenghougas* (sing. *Tenkougre*) or earth shrines, visibly manifested by clumps of trees, mountains, rocks, or rivers. *Tengsobas* or earth priests appeal to the Tengkougas on behalf of the local populations for help in sickness, for rain and good crops, and for children. When proper sacrifices are offered to the Tengkougas, their spiritual agents, called *kinkirsé*, enter the wombs of women and are born as children. Twins and children who die young are regarded as "evil" kinkirsé who entered a woman without being invited. Nevertheless, many persons consider twins as special gifts to parents in favor of the earth deities.

The earth itself, *Tenga*, is one of the principal deities of the Mossi. Tenga is

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
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When a woman has a number of stillbirths or
845 loses her children when they are still babies, however, it is believed
761 than these children were embodiments of the same *kinkirsi* (spirits)
776 who must be tricked into remaining on earth when it returns, and
443 the market place is chosen as the site for this trickery. As soon as such
851 a woman gives birth to a child, and old woman places it in a basket
443 and on the next market day takes it to the market place. Her intention is to "sell" the child in the hope that it would not die if owned by someone other than its mother. The old woman walks around the market place shouting: "I have something to sell!" Invariably a man will walk up to her, and after ascertaining the contents of the basket, offer to buy it. The price varies with the fortune of the man, but traditionally the amount paid has been 500 cowries or their equivalent. The man takes the child for a few minutes and then returns it to its vendor, telling her in a loud voice so that the kinkirsi will hear: "I would like you to give this child to 'X' (the child's mother) to be reared for me and I will pay for its upbringing and will come
[551] for the child in a few years. He then gives the child the name *Yamba*
[553] (slave), or *Yemdaogo* (male slave) if male and *Yempoko* (female slave) if a girl. The old woman then returns the child to its mother, relating what has passed in the market and indicating who the "owner" of her child is. The "owner" of the child may not even see the child again, and naturally does not take this ownership seriously. In many cases the money with which he bought the child was given to him by the child's father.

852 The market also plays an important part in the circumcision and
443 incision ceremonies of Mossi boys and girls. For about two to three months after the actual operations the young children, especially the boys are secluded in the circumcision lodges or compounds and have almost no contact with the village population. Their re-introduction to society always takes place on the great market day. The parents of the children buy new clothing for them this occasion, and on the appointed day the boys or girls parade together in the market and are offered gifts by the market people. Later in the day, they are dismissed and individually feted by their relatives.

585 Owing to the relatively unceremonious nature of Mossi marriages,
76 the market does not play a role in Mossi weddings. However, the
554 same thing cannot be said about the last important *rite de passage*,
443 especially the funeral of a chief, or important elder. Prior to the intervention of the French, and to a lesser extent even today, the announcement of the death of an important ruler was seen as the breakdown of law and order and was ritually dramatized by a popular raid
[565] on the markets throughout the territories (Skinner : ms). During the interregnum the vendors are subject to constant raids by members of